Education

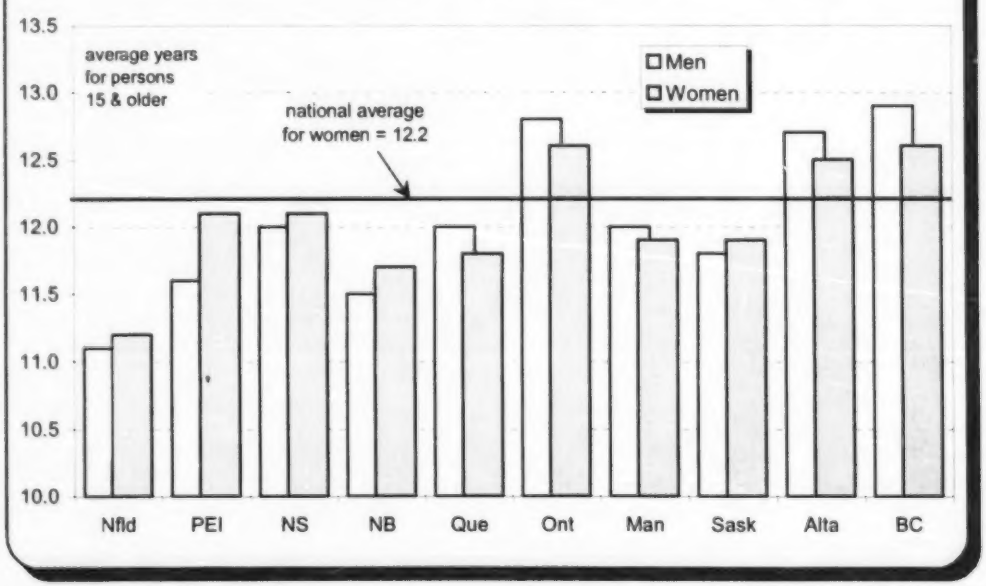
The average education level among Saskatchewan women is higher than among men and is increasing more quickly.

Much of the reliable statistical information about formal education levels[1] is available from the Statistics Canada Census, conducted every five years. Additional data on the relationship between the labour market and education are available from the Labour Force Survey[2]. Both sources are used in this statistical update.

One way to compare education levels across different years, provinces, and countries is to use the total years of schooling. This measure effectively removes the distinction between education received in primary/secondary schools, technical schools, and universities by treating each year of schooling the same.

Figure 1 shows that, on average, women in Saskatchewan had 11.9 years of schooling in 1996. This compares with 11.8 years for Saskatchewan men and 12.2 for all Canadian women. The Atlantic provinces and Saskatchewan are the only provinces in which women have, on average, more years of education than men. From 1991 to 1996, average years of schooling among Saskatchewan

Figure 1: Average Years of Schooling among Adults, by Province, 1996



women increased 0.6 years. Average years of schooling varies from a low of 9.8 among women 65 and older to a high of 13.1 for those 20 to 34 years of age.

The more traditional approach to measuring education levels does distinguish between secondary and post-secondary education and between completed and partial or incomplete degrees, diplomas, and certificates. With many post-secondary programs available to women who have not completed Grade 12, these statistics require careful interpretation[3].

Figure 2 shows the completed education level for adult (15 and

Figure 2: Formal Education, Saskatchewan Women 15 Years of Age and Older in 1996

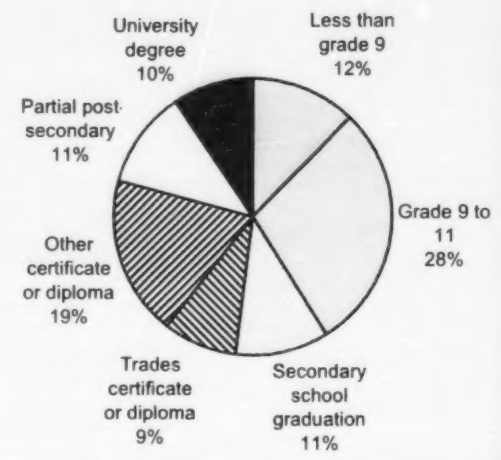
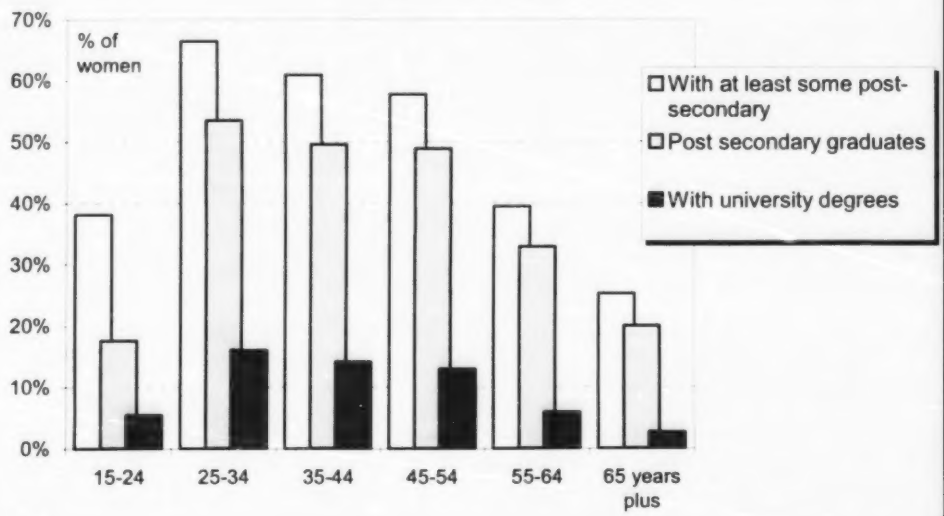
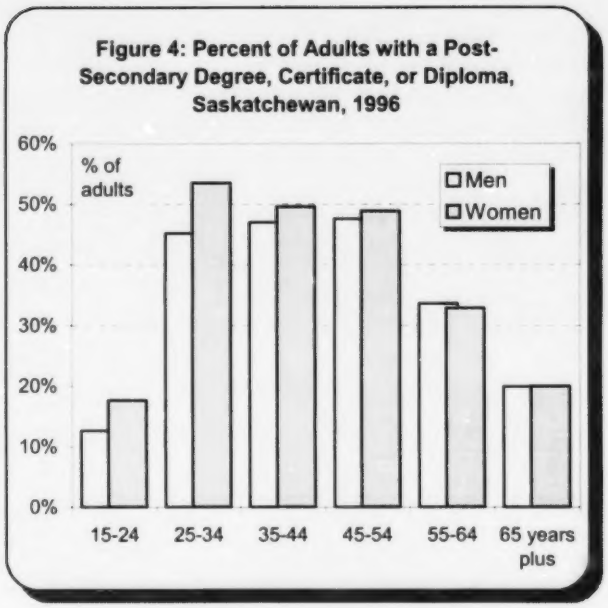

University degree 10%
Less than grade 9 12%
Partial post-secondary 11%
Grade 9 to 11 28%
Other certificate or diploma 19%
Trades certificate or diploma 9%
Secondary school graduation 11%

Figure 3: Formal Education Levels by Age Group, Saskatchewan Women in 1996



older) Saskatchewan women in 1996. At that time, 59% had at least completed grade 12, 48% had at least some post-secondary education (including those who may not have completed high school), 37% were post-secondary graduates, and 10% had a university degree.



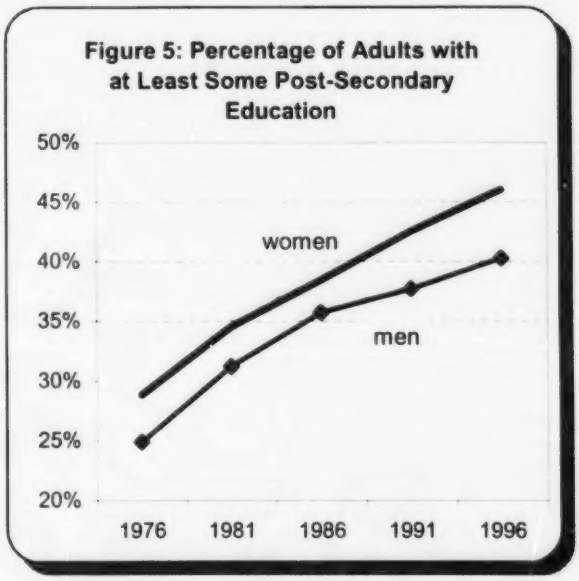
Formal education levels vary dramatically by age group, as Figure 3 shows. Except for those in the 15 to 24 age group, many of whom are still going to school, the percentage of women with a post-secondary degree, certificate, or diploma declines with age.

Women under the age of 55 are more likely than men to be post-secondary graduates (see Figure 4). Women under the age of 45 are also more likely than men in the same age group to have a university degree.

Changes over Time

Formal education levels for Saskatchewan women are increasing. Using the percentage of women with at least some post-secondary education as an indicator, education levels among women are increasing and are doing so more quickly than among men.

Figure 5 shows that the percentage of women with at least some post-secondary education has increased from



29% to 46%[4] over the 20 years from 1976 to 1996. Over the same period, the proportion of men with at least some post-secondary education increased from 25% to 40%.

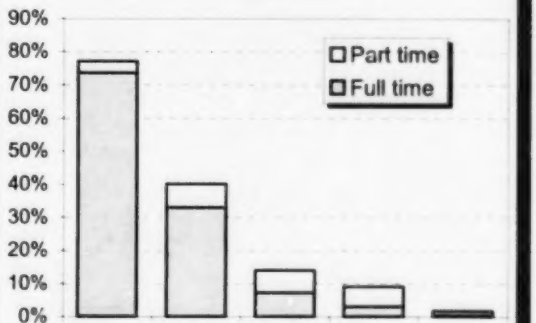
The differential between men and women is even more significant given their average ages. Women have, on average, higher levels of education than men even though there are more women than men in older age groups and educational attainment tends to be lower among seniors.

School Attendance

The Census also asks women if they had attended school, on either a full-time or part-time basis, in the eight months prior to the Census. Figure 6 shows that nearly 80% of women 15 to 19 years of age were in school for at least part of the 1995-96 school year.

In older age groups the percentage declines sharply and the proportion of women who are attending school on a part-time basis increases.

Figure 6: Percent of Women Attending School, 1995-96 School Year



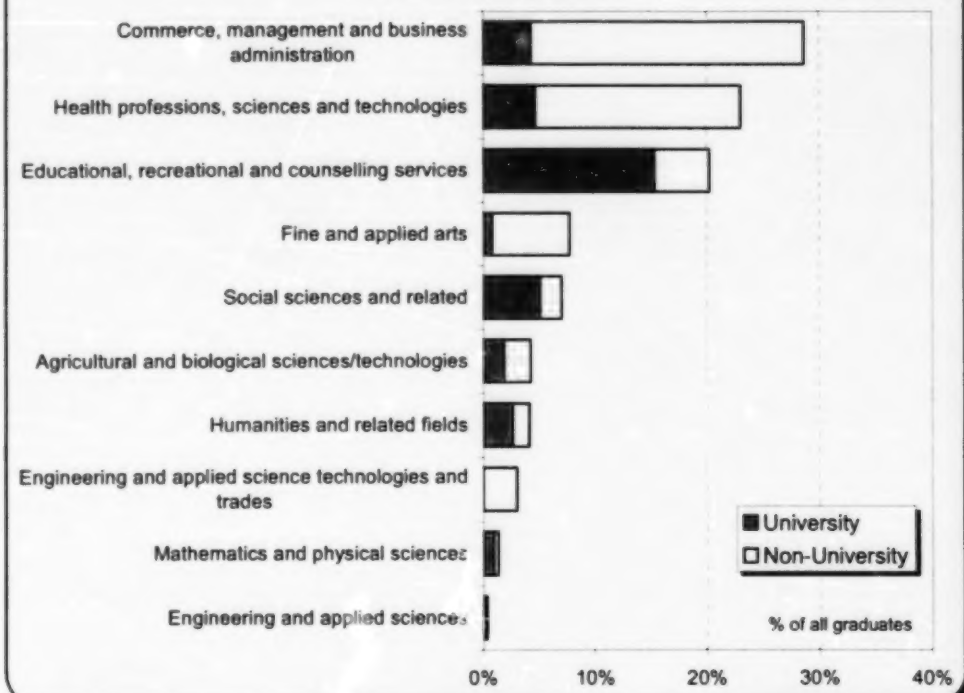
Women are more likely than men to be attending school, especially younger women. In the 1995-96 school year, 77% of women 15 to 19 years of age were in school compared with 74% of men in the same age group. In the 20 to 24 age group, 43% of women were in school compared with 35% of men.

Information from the Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina show that women are more common among current students as well. Women make up 57% of current students in the two universities[5].

Field of Study

Among women post-secondary graduates, the Census also records the field of study for their highest completed education level. Note that these figures represent the field of study for those who are living in the province and will not necessarily reflect the field of study among current students or graduates.

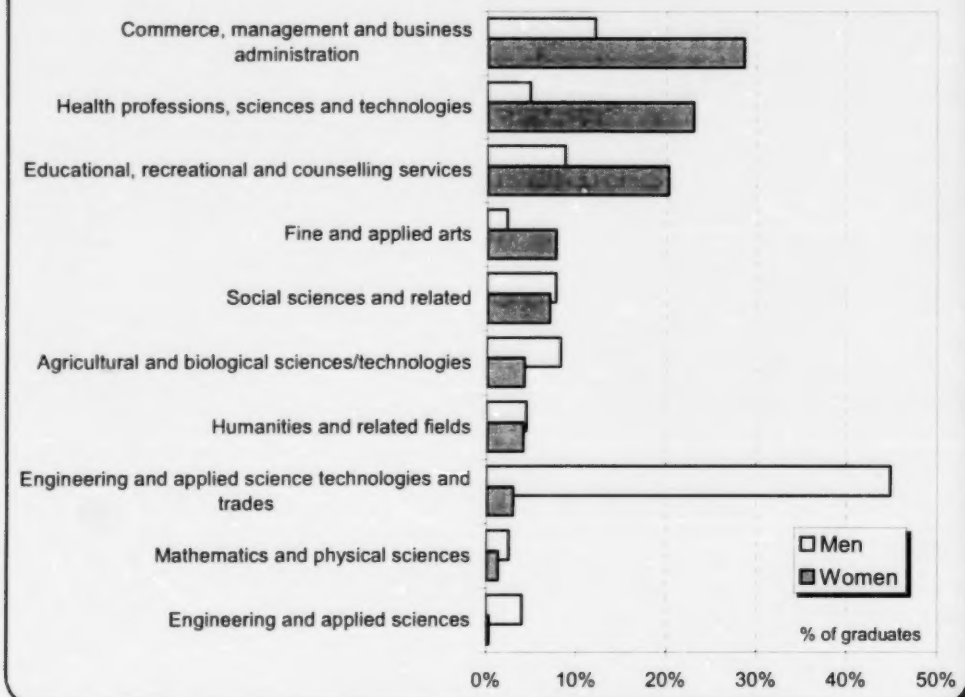
Figure 7: Field of Study for Women Post-Secondary Graduates, Saskatchewan, 1996



The most common field of study for Saskatchewan women is the "commerce, management, and business administration" group, almost exclusively received from a non-university institution (see Figure 7). In 1996, 29% of Saskatchewan women had this type of a degree/certificate/diploma. An education in the health sciences, again usually from a non-university institution, is the second most common and accounts for a further 23% of women. Less than 2% of women have a post-secondary education in engineering, mathematics, or the physical sciences.

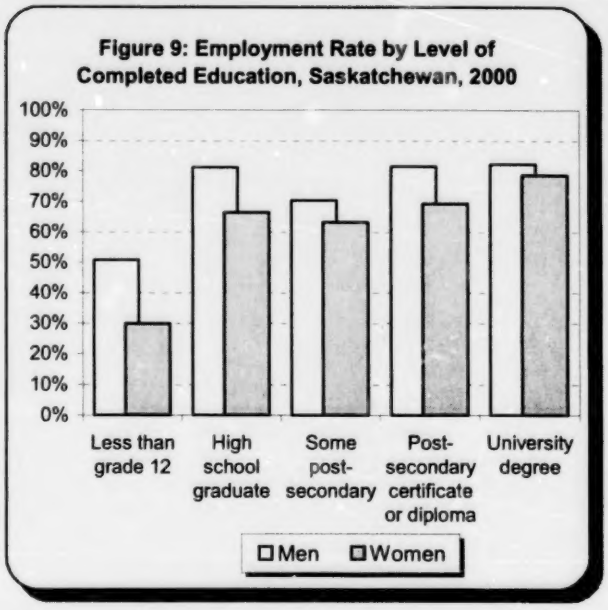
The most common degree/certificate/diploma received from a university is in the "education, recreation, counselling" group.

Figure 8: Field of Study for Post-Secondary Graduates, Saskatchewan, 1996



Although women and men have similar levels of completed education overall, women have substantially different kinds of post-secondary education (see Figure 8). Men's education is typically in either applied science and technology (including the construction trades) or in one of the physical sciences. In 1996, they were much less likely than women to have degrees/diplomas/certificates in the health or education fields.

Labour Force Activity



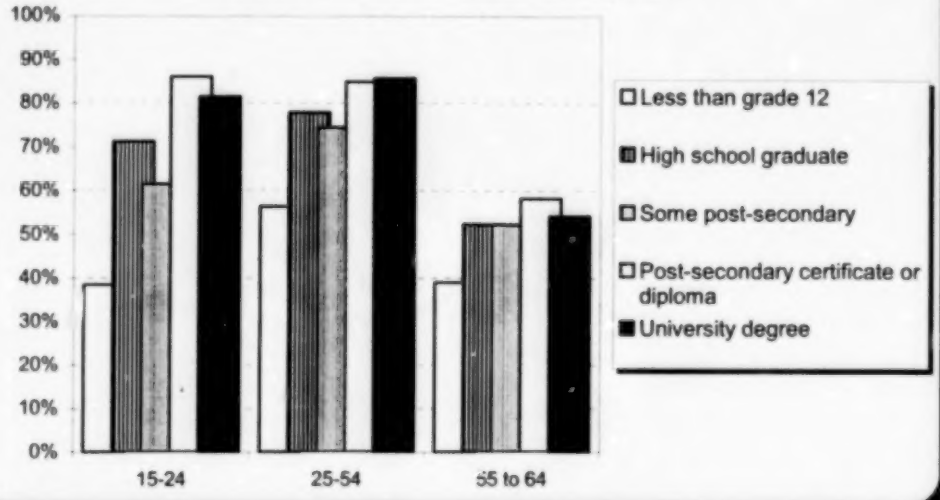
Education has a powerful effect on labour market activity for women. The best measure of this impact is the employment rate or employment-to-population ratio, the percentage of women who are employed. Figure 9 shows that in the year 2000, women with a university degree had an employment rate of 79% compared with 30% of those with less than Grade 12.

Two other observations can be made about the data in Figure 9. Firstly, men have higher employment rates than women in each of the education categories. The difference diminishes, however, at higher levels of completed education. Secondly, high school graduates are slightly more likely to be employed than those with a partial post-secondary education. The latter is the result of two factors.

- Many women with an incomplete post-secondary education are still in school and therefore out of the labour market.
- Those who have "dropped out" of a post-secondary program may not be able to work for the same reasons that they were unable to complete their education.

Age, when combined with education, also affects labour market activity. Figure 10 shows that for younger women (under 55 years of age), higher employment rates occur with higher levels of education. For older women, however, the employment rates are more equal across the age groups.

Figure 10: Employment Rate by Education Level and Age, Saskatchewan Women, 2000 Annual Average

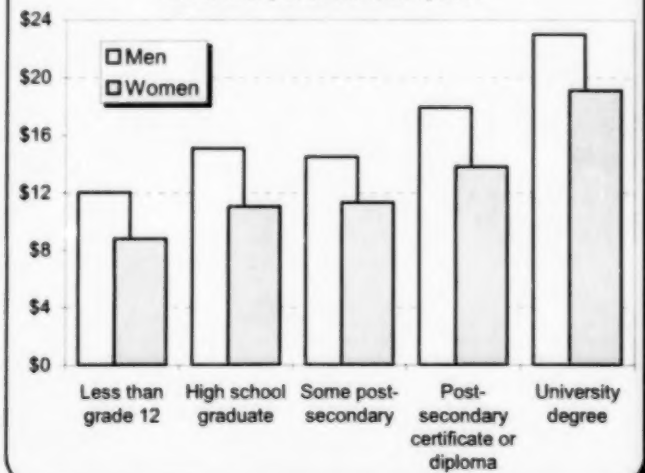


Wage Rates

Using the average hourly rate among paid employees[6] as an indicator, average wage rates rise dramatically as education levels increase (see Figure 11). This is especially true for women with a university degree where the average wage rate is $19.10 compared with $13.80 among those with a post-secondary certificate or diploma.

Figure 11 also shows that the gap between men and women's wages is somewhat wider at lower levels of education. Women with less than Grade 12 earn 73% of what men with a similar education level earn. Women with a university degree earn 83% of what men with a university degree earn.

Figure 11: Hourly Wage Rates by Completed Education, Saskatchewan, 2000



At the risk of oversimplifying a complex relationship, the data in Figure 9 and Figure 11 show two important relationships between a post-secondary education and labour market activity. Firstly, the receipt of a post-secondary diploma or certificate is equivalent to a university degree in terms of employment rates --the ability to obtain employment. Secondly, much higher earnings are available to women with university degrees rather than post-secondary certificates or diplomas.

Notes

Source: The majority of these data are derived from the 1996 Statistics Canada Census. The education level is determined from the "long form" of the Census so it is, in effect, based on a 20% sample of households. Only persons living in private dwellings receive the long form so these statistics exclude those living in so-called "collective" dwellings including, for example, prisons, special care homes, hotels, homes for the disabled, and group homes.

1. *The term "education" used in this statistical update refers only to education received from an educational institution, including institutions in other provinces or countries. On the job and other specific skills training is not included.*

2. *For a variety of reasons including jurisdictional issues, costs, and response rates, the Labour Force Survey framework excludes the population normally resident on Reserve. The survey includes the Aboriginal population living off Reserve in its survey frame.*

3. *In the hierarchy of educational attainment used by Statistics Canada a completed course is always considered as "higher" than an incomplete course. University degrees are considered as higher than certificates or diplomas which are, in turn, considered higher than graduation from secondary school. An apprenticeship trade certificate is considered as equivalent to other kinds of certificates/diplomas. Note that some university programs yield certificates/diplomas rather than degrees.*

4. *The definition of "post-secondary" education changed in 1991. To maintain historical continuity, Figure 5 excludes persons who did not graduate from high school before taking post-secondary education. Consequently, the percentage "at least some post-secondary education" in Figure 5 is 46% whereas it is 48% in Figure 2 because Figure 2 includes those who have some post-secondary education but who have not completed high school.*

5. *Source: University of Regina – University of Regina Student Enrollment Summary, 1998-99, Internet site: www.uregina.ca/presoff/orp/FACT-BOOK.*
University of Saskatchewan – 2000 Statistics, Section 2, Internet site: usg.usask.ca/statistics/index.html.

6. *Paid employees excludes self-employed women. The wage rate is calculated before deductions and excludes tips, commissions, and bonuses.*